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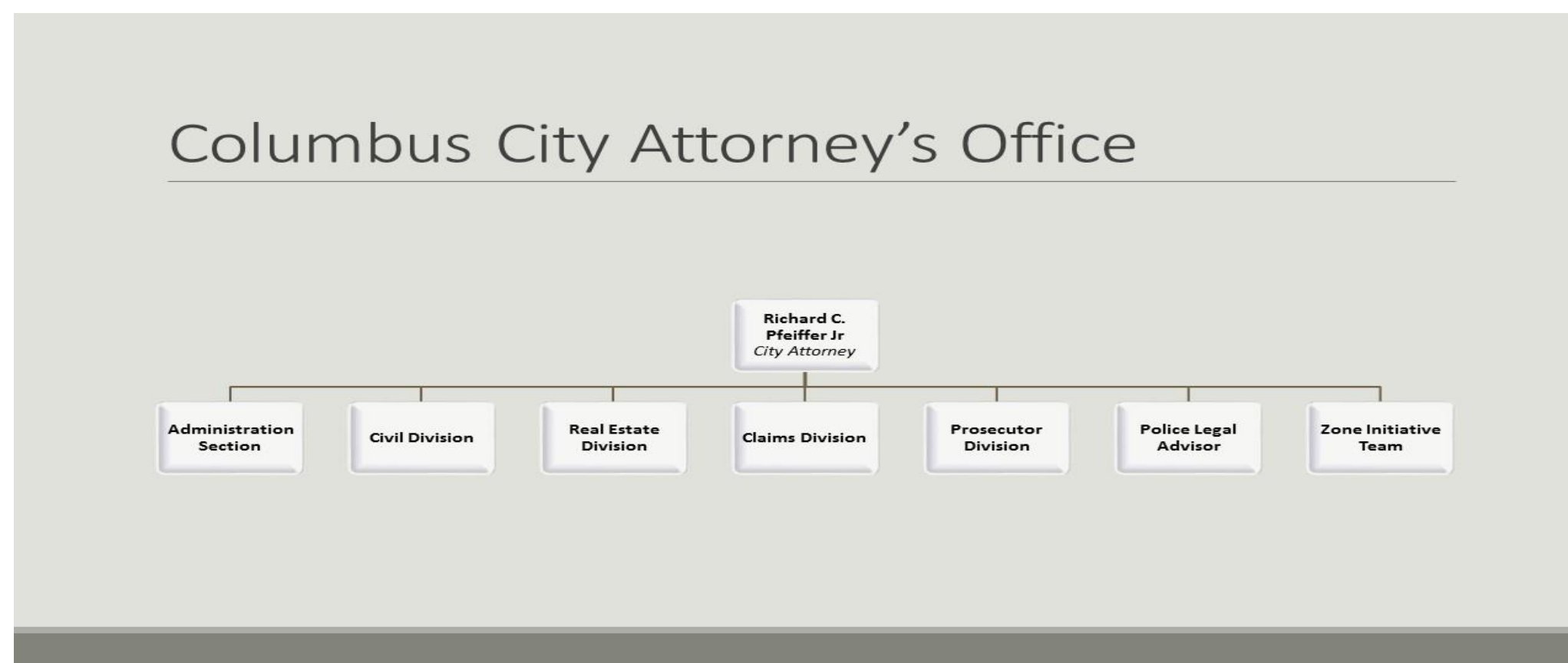
# Columbus City Attorney's Office

William R. Martin

Franklin University, CJAD-495 Capstone Final Project

## Introduction

- The Columbus City Attorney's Office was developed in 1914 when the Ohio Constitution deemed it legal for municipalities to enforce laws. The office has evolved and changed many times since the inception of the office in 1914.
- The primary mission of the Columbus City Attorney's Office is to prosecute misdemeanor offenses for the city of Columbus. In addition to prosecution, the office also files civil complaints against those who owe debts to the city for many different reasons that will be discussed in the organization portion of the report. The office also develops programs within the court system to try to alleviate the number of cases that must go before judges which are often referred to Diversion Programs.
- The organization chart (pictured below) provides a visual understanding how there are many divisions to the Columbus City Attorney's Office and there is not a vertical hierarchy outside of each division besides the City Attorney and each division.



- **Administration Section**
- **Civil Division**
- **Real Estate Division**
- **Claims Division**
- **Prosecutor Division**
- **Police Legal Advisors**
- **Zone Initiative Team**



Bill Hedrick is the Chief of Staff for the City Attorney and leads the Administration Section of the Columbus City Attorney's Office. Hedrick also is the lead on the development of the diversion programs that are provided by the office.

## Diversion Programs

### Theft Diversion Program

- **Must be a first time offender**
- **No criminal history**
- **Completion of the program removes the crime from record**
- **If the program is not completed, the suspended sentence is then reinstated and the individual could face jail time**
- **In 2013, 855 individuals qualified and completed the program**

### Check Resolution Program

- **To resolve dishonored checks without the use of criminal charges**
- **Similar to mediation**
- **Eliminate 2,861 individuals from being charged with a crime**
- **Recovered \$358,000 towards dishonored checks**

### Traffic Diversion Program

- **Also used to keep individuals out of the courtroom**
- **Requires participants to complete drivers education and defensive driving courses**
- **In 2013 the program had a success rate of 67%**
- **1,009 total participants**

## Challenges

- **Budgets**
- **Judges**
- **Caseloads**
- **Public Expectations**
- **Growing Population**

## Conclusion

Going into this course I thought I had a general understanding of how the criminal justice system worked. Now that I have completed this research project, I have come to realize that there are many factors that contribute to the way these organizations conduct business.

Budgets seem to be the most influential factor that can either help or hurt an organization and can also determine the success that they can have. Also public expectation was something I never had thought about and after interviewing Hedrick, it plays a much larger role than I had imagined.

Now that I have completed this course and the other Criminal Justices courses at Franklin, I have learned so much and have realized that it is not as black and white as it appears on the outside. Peoples lives are dramatically impacted by the way criminal justice systems operate. There are many ways to handle individuals within the criminal justice system and each one has different needs to reach that point where they are ready to become a productive member of society again.

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